

## Rubber Duck bound for Beijing

Dutch designer Florentijn Hofman is bringing his most popular creation to the capital for Beijing Design Week.







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# Authorized duck to battle rubber counterfeits

By Liu Xiaochen

The social media sensation surrounding the Rubber Duck in Hong Kong's Victoria Harbor has inspired many counterfeiters.

There have been copies of the duck appearing in cities such as Hangzhou, Wuhan, Tianjin, Chongqing and Dongguan – especially on Children's Day.

Last Saturday, the duck's Dutch designer Florentijn Hofman signed up with the organizing committee of Beijing Design Week to introduce an authorized Rubber Duck to Beijing after the duck leaves Hong Kong on September 26.

Most of his discussion with the committee focused on copyright protection.

"In the past seven years, several ducks have popped up all over the world, but none were as successful as the one in Hong Kong," Hofman said. "Maybe it's a sign of the social media era."

Part of the duck's draw may be attributed to "Kawaii culture," he said, an obsession with cuteness found throughout much of Asia.

"I hope design week can show China supports originality and creativity, and that this is a focus of the culture. Without being creative and original, humanity will not progress," Hofman said.

To protect designers' rights, the organizing committee invited Wang Jun, a committee member from the All-China Lawyers Association, to serve as its senior legal adviser in protecting the Rubber Duck.

"Copyright protection falls



"Beijing Design Week's choice to sign with Hofman is one of our most important projects to protect designers' copyrights," said Zeng Hui, deputy director of the organizing committee's office. "Using this opportunity, we plan to promote the work as an example of intellectual property protection."

Another important purpose for Hofman's trip to Beijing is to explore Beijing's exhibition area and discuss details with the organizing committee.

"It is a very challenging project. We need to consider all the details such as its 24-hour electric supply, floatability, stability, wind speed and the climate conditions in the display area," he said.

The location of the Beijing Rubber Duck remains uncertain. Organizers hope to put the duck downtown. Hofman said the duck would be around 10 meters fall this time.

Born in 1977, Hofman has been deploying rubber ducks around the world since 2001.

Ducks have been sent to Amsterdam, Nuremberg, Sao Paulo, Osaka, London and Sydney. The ducks have had great commercial value, boosting local tourism and retail.

"I think the really interest-

ing point of the Rubber Duck is how it takes people back to their childhood when they had no pressure," Hofman said.

"In the age of the Internet and high-speed travel, the world's water has become a global bathtub. The Rubber Duck makes this global bathtub a connection between us," Hofman said.

Amsterdam is the guest city at this year's Beijing Design Week, and the Rubber Duck will be a gift from Amsterdam.

The Embassy of The Netherlands also announced its support and attendance the press conference.

## Ancient trees accepted for adoption

By Liu Xiaoche

On Tuesday, a 1,100 yearold Sabina chinensis at Ritan Park was adopted by Beijing Automotive Group. Another 15 cypress trees older than 400 years were also adopted by social institutes for a period of two years.

The Capital Green Commission Office organized the adoption of 27 similar ancient trees on March 12, Arbor Day. Most trees are located in community parks.

Gan Jing, deputy director of the Capital Green Commission Office, said Beijing has more than 40,000 ancient trees. Most are sophora japonica, cypresses, pines and gingkos found in palaces, temples, imperial mausoleums and tombs and royal gardens.

Florentijn Hofman

Photo by Alex Snetkov

under tort law in China. We

have discussed the emergence

of copycat works with Hoff-

man. Many have substantial

similarities with the autho-

rized one. We will continually

support and follow up on its

protection," Wang said.

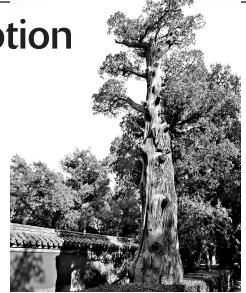
The adoption of ancient trees is one way citizens are encouraged to carry out their planting obligations. One ancient tree adoption is valued the same as 50 tree plantings.

While voluntary tree-plantings take one day, adoptions can be in progress for a whole year. Those interested in adopting a

tree can contact the county or district's landscaping division to sign an agreement. Adopters are allowed to post a sign near the trees as a memorial.

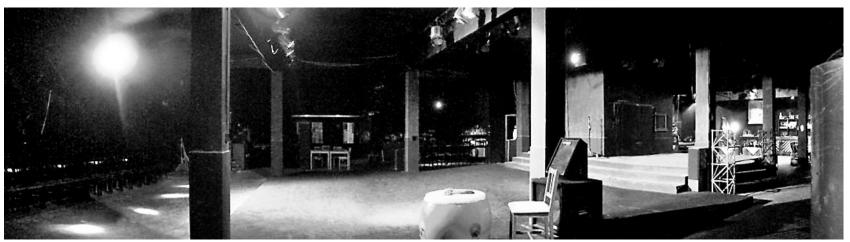
But maintenance costs for ancient trees can be ten times the cost of younger trees. Trees older than 300 years require 1,800 yuan in upkeep; trees between 100 and 300 years old require 900 yuan.

These costs cover conservation and repairs, such as improving soil, filling holes, controlling diseases and insect pests and installing lightning rods.



Ancient tree in Ditan Park

CFP Photo



# What's left for private theaters?

By Bao Chengrong

Operating a private theater remains challenging in China, largely because of poor attendance and an undocumented path of development.

Theater managers from 10 cities met to discuss these and other issues facing small theaters during a three-day symposium at Penghao Theater that began June 21.

## **Current problems**

The lack of an audience is the most urgent problem in commerce-oriented cities like Shenzhen.

Zhou Xing, an independent drama producer, said that although hundreds of people in Shenzhen enjoy urban love movies, few have an interest in similar drama.

Even the private theaters that do enjoy an audience are finding their numbers dwindling.

Wang Xiang, manager of Penghao Theater, said his theater is losing 700,000 yuan each month – even with 300,000 to 500,000 yuan in subsidies coming from the Dongcheng District government.

Escalating rent, high production costs and censorship by the local cultural officials are other major problems. Wang Jingguo, a manager at Shanghai's MECOOON, has suffered from sponsoring a performance that ended up smacked down by censors.

"Even for a low cost drama, we have to pay half the total costs before finding out whether we will make it past the censors," Wang said.

But what disappointed him was that few censors have the background needed to appreciate drama. One of his dramas was refused simply because the censor did not understand the 18-page document was a script.

## Attempts to reform

Although private theaters have faced many difficulties in the last decade, managers still see a hope.

One of those is education. The growing market in Shanghai is being driven by emerging university drama organizations. Many members of such organizations



Performance at Yanzi Theater

Photos provided by Penghao Theater



Play at Cao Tai Ban

have gone on to open their own theaters after graduation.

Zhang Hong and two friends transformed a medical warehouse into a theater seven years ago. Although the theater was forced to close in 2008, he continues to invite young people to create dramas in his studio.

Cao Xi, manager of Drama Rainbow, suggested building theaters for children between the ages of 3 and 18 – an age range traditionally ignored by drama educators.

"Ten years later, when these children become university students, they will do things far beyond what we can imagine. They will be independent individuals who dare to express their ideas and use their own thoughts to deal with the world," Cao said.

"That's when change will really come."

Cao's idea is based on Theater in Education, a concept tested in Coventry, UK after World War II. The reconstruction saw the development of two iconic landmarks:



Symposium on private theater at Penghao Theater

a church and a theater. The former aimed to control people's thoughts while the latter to liberate them.

Cao said "Theater in Education" has three characteristics. First, it allows a group to be more conscious about society's problems and learn cooperation in the process. Second, it urges participants and the audience to examine events from a distance, giving them new perspectives. Third, every participant can let his or her voice be heard.

The UK's education theaters were mainly focused on blending problems into scenes. Cao said they taught children about history, nature, society, culture and values.

He said such theaters could help parents to express themselves in the next three to five years.

As for the lack of audience, Fang Chunjian, representative of a drama school in Beijing, suggested each city work to cultivate local drama producers. Fang said that can build a dependable cultural audience rather than a commercial audience.

Fang also encouraged managers to overcome their isolation from the audience by blending communities into private theaters.

"Community residents may be attracted by the stories in dramas first. Once they find them interesting, they will be more likely to go out and watch community drama," Fang said.

## Learning from abroad

Makoto Sato is a pioneer private theater and troupe founder in Japan. He said the Japanese government did not sponsor cultural activities until the 1980s. Few students had a chance to study drama in school, and most performers were self-taught.

Each troupe had to find a theater as its base, no matter how small and poor it is. Every private theater had its own playwrights.

Sato started writing plays when he was 19. The play-wrights were given freedom to choose their own themes, language and performance style. Performers favored body language over words.

Sato also suggested the use of a black tent as a moving theater for performance tours.

During the last 20 years, he has brought his tents to 120 places, including big cities and villages with as few as 200 residents.

# On the eve of banking revolution



By Zhao Hongyi
The financial industry has been pounded by unexpected competition.

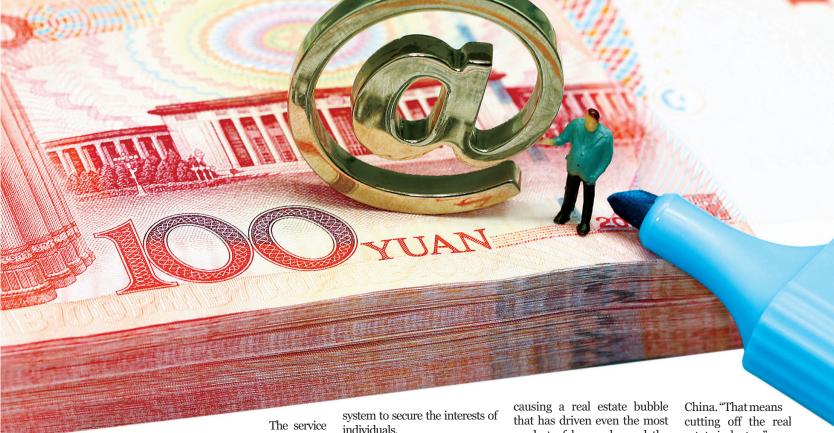
First the online business giant Taobao

sis crippled interbank lending for sev-

In all these problems, the central government has taken a hand off approach

they may have to reform and make more





## A new contender

Twelve years ago, entrepreneur Jack Ma founded what has become China's premier online business platform.

The Hangzhou-based Taobao has exploded since 2008, with millions of small businesses flocking to the site to open virtual storefronts for everything from exotic foods to high-end digital projects.

The cornerstone of the platform is Zhifubao, an escrow-like system used to settle Taobao's transactions and capable of integrating with existing online banking systems.

Both customers and buyers have an incredible amount of their financial resources tied up in Zhifubao on any given day. To make the service more productive, Taobao recently added a slew of new features to Zhifubao.

Yu'ebao, the most popular, allows Zhifubao account holders to purchase three kinds of banking products offering interest rates as high as 3.5 to 4 percent: far more than the 2.5 percent rate offered by stateowned banks.

attracted more than one million users by the end of its first week.

But these new products put Zhifubao in direct competition with state-owned banks, many of whom met to appeal to the China Securities Regulatory Commission to strike down Zhifubao's new features as "illegal activity.'

Unexpectedly, the commission fully supported Taobao, but issued a stern warning that it must secure the benefits of its clients.

Online financing products have been around in the US for many years. A decade ago, a somewhat similar system called Paypal emerged from the US' eBay platform.

But it and other financers took a tumble after the financial crisis of 2008, when interest rates became negative and drove buyers away.

## **Deposit insurance**

After 16 years of discussion. the Chinese government seems determined to allow its banks to file for bankruptcy.

The China Banking Regulatory Commission and People's Bank of China, the central bank, are preparing a deposit insurance individuals.

The Shanghai Interbank Offered Rate (SHIBOR) climbed as high as 30 percent last week and held at more than 10 percent since. But the central bank seems determined not to intervene in favor of stateowned financial institutions.

In an example of tough love, the central bank and regulatory commission has told depositors to safeguard their own money.

China has the highest deposit ratio in the world. Deposits have climbed from 3 trillion yuan in the 1980s to tens of trillion of yuan.

Yet the central bank continues to inject huge sums of money into state-owned commercial banks, creating a massive lending pool.

As a result, the M2 money supply, a key indicator of inflation, has climbed from less than 10 trillion yuan to more than 100 trillion yuan in the last decade, crushing the value of both enterprise and personal savings.

Where did all that money go? Banks have developed a habit of giving high-revenue loans to real estate developers instead of businesses engaged in real industry or agriculture,

modest of homes beyond the budgets of ordinary workers.

By increasing required deposits, the government is hoping to avoid catastrophic loss when its state-owned banks finally go bust.

When a bank files for bankruptcy, all personal accounts held by the bank are wiped out. The deposits are used to restore a percentage of an account holder's money when this occurs.

## **Further reforms**

Today, the Chinese financial industry rests on the eve of transformation.

Since 1980, all Chinese banks have been state-owned with the exception of Minsheng Bank. The hundreds of small commercial banks in the cities and countryside are in actuality owned by the local government.

The close connection of commercial banks and government made the banks far too comfortable with writing risky loans to their friends.

"The central government wants its banks to make more responsible use of their money," said Li Xiaoning, a financial analyst for Bank of estate industry.

"In the meantime, it also tells the public that putting your assets in a bank has an element of risk. You cannot simply deposit your money and forget about it," she said.

As for the risks faced by bankers, there are criminal and civil laws that could be used. The ultimate goal is to force these state-owned banks to privatize.

In the coming months, banks will be allowed to decide their own deposit interest rates to compete in a free market.

The US Federal Deposit Insurance Company (FDIC) started this system long ago. In 2008, the company raised the rescue rate for individual deposits to a maximum \$250,000 from a previous \$100,000.

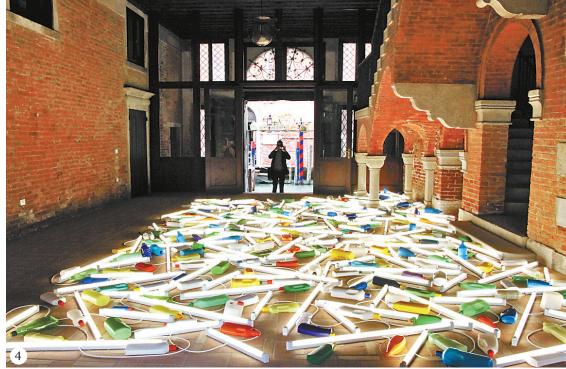
The US has seen close to 400 commercial banks file for bankruptcy. The reserve system allows banks to compete in the market and promotes mergers.

But individuals are still cautioned that they must watch over their assets and take responsibility for protecting their own money.

# The 55th Venice Art Biennale









he 55th Venice Art Biennale this year is focusing on the theme "The Encyclopedic Palace," a concept raised by Italian artist Marion Auriti. The art collections opened on June 1 and will be on display till November 24 at the Venice Virgin Garden and Armory.

1. Chinese artist Li Wei's performance of flying in the sky with green smog is a beautiful scene at the Kenya Pavillon collateral event. The smog comes from his distinctive shoes.

Li held a similar show in Paris with red fog. He is always amazed by the uncertain part of art and happy to see the surprised expressions of the audience.

2. Exhibit of artist Marc Quinn. Self.

The artist used his blood and glass-fiber reinforced plastic to shape his own image and to question who we are, what we can become as well as what is natural and what is not.

3. The video installation "Trafaria Praia" by Portuguese artist Joana Vasconcelos is on display at the pavillion of Portugal for preview of the 55th International Art Exhibition in Venice.

The Portugal Pavilion is a floating blue paradise.

4. An installation at the New Zealand Pavillon by artist Bill Culbert: "Pacific Flotsam."

## Rainbows from the east

## NE•TIGER shines at 2013 German-China Culture Festival

Top fashion brand NE•TIGER attended the 2013 German-Chinese Culture Festival at the Chinese Culture Center in Berlin from May 24 to June 16. The event coincided with Premier Li Keqiang's visit to Germany.

Titled "Rainbows from the East Inherit Classics" NE•TIGER's collection of luxury garments exemplified the pinnacle of China's fashion culture – a 5,000-year evolution that incorporates the art of 56 ethnicities.

Distinguished guests from political and business circles were stunned by NE•TIGER's splendid Chinese garments. Among its models was Hu Bing, an international male fashion model and actor who has long cooperated with the brand.

NE•TIGER's designs draw on history and blend Chinese elements with Western styles. The garments frequently incorporate minority ethnic ele-



ments in ways that suit modern styles and appeal to Chinese tastes. It makes frequent use of Yun embroidery, where one inch is considered as valuable as a pound of gold, as well as precious and colorful silk needlework, knots, papercuts and paintings. Each garment radiates Chinese flavor and NE•TIGER luxury.

China has a long history of producing luxury goods such as silk, porcelain, gold, silver, jade

and tea, all of which met with incredible worldwide demand. Today, Chinese luxury brands are emerging again to compete with the world's best, and NE•TIGER is at the forefront.

The brand remains dedi-

cated to competing with Western luxury brands on the world market and reviving Chinese luxury culture.

"Chinese garments represent the spirit of China's nationalities," said Zhang Zhifeng, creator and art supervisor of NE•TIGER. "In a globalized world, the 5,000-year history of Chinese fashion is an important element of shared culture. China is leading world fashion trends together with European and American culture, and will open a new era of splendid civilization and fashion!"

NE•TIGER's latest collection is more than an assortment of Chinese emblems: it is a symbol of national strength and rich history. The brand sees itself as personally responsible for reviving Chinese fashion culture and bringing traditional Chinese garments to the world.

(By Zhao Hongyi)

# Pouring life into words

By Chen Nan

Yao Qian is best known for adding delicate emotions to his song lyrics. His decades of experience as a lyricist shine in every work.

For listeners curious about the development of his sensitivity, his new book *Sense It* offers a glimpse into his creative process and collection of Yao's recent magazine and newspaper pieces.



Yao Qian

## **Productive lyricist**

Although columns sound ordinary compared to the life of a lyricist, *Sense It* offers plenty of insight into Yao's creative process.

At his best, Yao achieves a level that transcends merely heartwarming words — one no other writer can match.

Yao is a man of many careers: Taiwanese pop lyricist, writer, producer, music manager, former head of DJ and SONY Records and general manager of EMI and Virgin Records.

Today, he is the multimedia general manager of Music Nation Ursa Major. He has successfully managed many pop artists, such as the Taiwanese divas Elva Hsiao, Rene Liu and CoCo Lee. His lyric credits include some 600 songs.

Yao's wit, intelligence, sensitivity and emotional appeal have a haunting quality, and *Sense It* explores the writer's deft rhymes, inventive imagery, emotional turbulence and witty solutions for bringing new life to stale genres.

He devotes full chapters to reflections on love and lifestyle, and offers a comprehensive survey of personal anecdotes and travel experience.

"When I was around 25, I sought assurance that good, clean words would find an appreciative audience," Yao said. "Today, what I treasure is something more simple and pure — something free of pretentious intentions."

"Yao's greatest advantage is his ability to mold words from a feminine perspective. He was always motivated to come up with a song which would touch the soul of ordinary listeners," said Zhang Yadong, Yao's friend and a prolific record producer. "The text offers a careful analysis of how China's best wordsmiths see fashion, trends and lifestyles."

Peppered throughout are seemingly random reflections on fashion and textual analysis. Yao's lyrics clearly come from personal experience and are fascinating in a psychological context.

In these pages, the lyrics become associated with elements of American modernism as the lyricists pair Chinese vernacular with song.

## **Result of shyness**

Yao is famous for his vivid and sentimental love stories told through song. His fame took off during the 1990s, when countless teens swallowed up every character he wrote.

But as a child, Yao was too shy to speak to strangers. He was easily intimidated and seldom looked into others' eyes. He developed a habit of staring at the ground, or at people's fingers and toes when they weren't looking.

Among his lost chances at love was one girl with bright white shoes and stockings. "Although she passed away years later, the image of her standing under the sun with white shoes was burned into my mind. Now whenever I see white shoes, I'm reminded of feelings of unrequited love."

Before Yao set his sights on becoming a prolific writer and lyricist, he made a fleeting attempt at Industrial Design. After college, he transferred from the textile industry to auto sales.

At the age of 25, he got a position as an assistant in a small company. But the defining moment in the Yao Qian's career came eight years later in 1994, when Faye Wong and Winnie Hsin's "I Do" topped the Taiwanese billboard.

Many said his words were simple and had a childlike innocence, but behind them was an adult sentiment.

Yao collaborated with several female singers to describe urban indifference, individual emotional expression, as well as the concept of time and the beauty of human nature.

"Smell" is one of the finest examples of Yao's language: "I miss your smile; I miss your jacket; I miss your white socks. And your breath. I miss your kiss. The tender smell of smoke within your fingers. And the feeling when I am loved in my memory." The simple but melancholic line captured millions of teenage hearts in the 1990s.

The imaginative and dramatic internal monologue comes off as equally confused and natural.

Yao's words have ushered in change and built careers. There's a substantial part of the Chinese music industry that owes him its thanks.

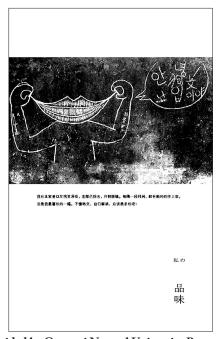


Sense It



Yao Qiang (left) and Zhang Yadong (right)





Photos provided by Guangxi Normal University Press

# **FIJING IUUAY** Editor: Wei Ying Designer: Deng Ning

# Beat the heat at yummy delis



A half quinoa salad and Cuban sandwich, 68 yuan

Bu Annie Wei

Who wants to spend a hot summer day working over a hot stove? There's nothing nicer than being able to drop in at a neighborhood deli and grab a healthy smoothie, cake or salad.

This week, *Beijing Today* tried two delis: the newly reopened Modo at Sanlitun and Deli de Luxe at Chaoyang Park's west gate.

## Modo: attractive deli

The tapas and wine restaurant Modo was one of the first tenants at Sanlitun Taikooli, formerly known as Sanlitun Village.

Two weeks ago it reopened as a deli.

Although tiny, it remains chic and stylish, with restaurant seating and an outdoor

Diners can mix and match their favorite combinations, such as a half salad and half sandwich for 68 yuan, or three kinds of salads for 88 yuan.

We tried the quinoa salad (58 yuan) with tomato, cucumber, radish, red beans, pine nuts, raisins, cilantro and caraway seed. Quinoa, a highly nutrition grain from South America, is rarely seen in China.

We liked the Cuban sandwich (68 yuan), particularly the roasted pork with melted Gouda cheese, pickles, mustard and greens. The roast and crispy pork gave the sandwich a great kick.

Soups start from 25 yuan. Pair them with homemade bread for a simple and filling meal.

You can also find five pastas (from 60 yuan), charcuterie and appetizers (starting at 48 yuan).

For the grill and oven, we liked Modo's crispy pork belly priced 128 yuan.



Inside Modo

Photos by An Jianda

There are a lot of takeout items, such as coffee beans, specialty teas and wine.

## Modo

Where: S10-31, 3F, SanlitunTaikooli, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am – 10 pm Tel: 6415 7207

## Deli de Luxe: community kitchen

Hidden inside the Jingyuan Compound opposite Chaoyang West Gate, Deli de Luxe is more like a home kitchen with one table, flowers, books and a few gourmet magazines in English.

But a lot of people come every day for its healthy, homecooked meals.

The offerings are simple: assorted pastries (15 yuan), yogurt and milk (50 yuan), ciabatta (40 yuan),

organic quiche with spinach and bacon (60 yuan) and a soup of the day (40 yuan).

## Deli de Luxe

Where: Parkview Tower, 1 JingyuanXiaojie, ChaoyangGongyuan Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 8 am – 7 pm, Monday to Friday, 8 am – 3 pm, Saturday and closed Sundays

Tel: 6538 6278



Cake of the day, 35 yuan

Huajia Yiyuan's courtyard

## Spicy Xiaolongxia: langoustines

By Annie Wei

A decade ago, the prosperous Guijie west of Dongzhimen saw business driven by a crazy for oil-boiled fish and spicy, numbing langoustines.

However, many diners avoided langoustines after several reports that they were being farmed in the drainage basins of China's most polluted rivers.

That's not the case anymore. Most langoustines on the market today are farmed in clean environments and shipped in from Jiangsu Province.

For diners who miss their tight, chewy tex-

ture, try the xiaolongxia gourmet festival at Huajia Yiyuan.

In addition to the traditional spicy and numbing flavor, you can try garlic, salted, or deep-fried langoustines, as well as other home-style Beijing dishes.

Huajia Yiyuan is a long-established restaurant at Guijie. Its courtyard interior has made it an enduring popular dining spot.

## HuajiaYiyuan

Where: 5 Dongzhimen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm Tel: 5128 3316



Spicy, numbing langoustines



Fried duck



Fried langoustines

CFP Photos

# Greet the summer sun with color

By Annie Wei

Summer is the season to show some skin and play with color. This week, we scouted three new stores at Sanlitun that deal in brands known for their young looks and bold color choices.



Marimekko offers many colored prints.

## Marimekko: colorful patterns

This famous Finnish fashion brand has finally made its debut in China.

Marimekko is famous for brightly colored prints and simple styles, and is most popular for its women's garments and home furnishings.

Things are quite pricy considering the fabric quality.

An apron costs nearly 600 yuan, and the water-proof material for making tablecloths or bathroom curtains starts from 650 yuan per square meter. All materials are dyed and made in Finland.

Its teacups and pots are cheaper because they are made in Thailand. Prices range from 100 to as much as 1,000 yuan.

## Marimekko

Where: S8-10C, Sanlitun Taikoo Li, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 9 pm Tel: 6416 4626



Marimekko's Spring and Summer 2013 collection CFP Photos





Hollister at Sanlitun CFP Photo

## **Paul Smith: British chic**

For suit and shirt shopping, we recommended Paul Smith. We love its bold color choices for menswear and its combination of classic and quirky.

Its flagship store opened at the Village North two weeks ago. The twofloor store houses its men's and women's collections, black label and secondary series, and an exhibition of designer Paul Smith's art, furniture and architecture.

## **Paul Smith**

Where: N3-16, Village North, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District Open: 10 am - 10 pm



Women's multi-lace dress, 24,800 yuan

## Hollister: young and sexy

Although the brand originally focused on customers between the ages of 14 and 18, its sporty image has found broader appeal.

Tomorrow, the store plans to open its first outlet in Sanlitun with its usual parade of topless male models designed to draw in shoppers.

Shoppers can expect to find plenty of cotton basics (from 200 yuan), short jeans and shirts.

We liked its beachwear. Hollister's bikini tops (250 yuan) are available

in many colors like rose, polka dots, navy blue and bright yellow – all ideal for outdoor pool parties.

If you are concerned about showing belly fat, Hollister also has chic one-piece swimsuits (from 600 yuan) in more than a dozen patterns.

## Hollister

Where: Building behind Adidas, Sanlitun Taikoo Li, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm Tel: 6417 6110